THis Apologeticall Narration *of our Reverend and deare Brethren the learned Authors of it, 'tis ſo full of peaceableneſſe, modeſty, and candour; and withall, at this time ſo ſeaſonably needfull, as well towards the vindication of the Proteſtant party in generall, from the aſperſions of Incommunicableneſſe within it ſelfe, and Incompatibleneſſe with Magiſtracy; as of themſelves in particular, both againſt miſreportings from without, & ſome poßible miſtakings from within too: That however for mine own part I have appeared on, and doe ſtill encline to the Presbyteriall way of Church Government, yet doe I think it every way fit for the Preſſe.*

Charles Herle.

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Charles Herle.

REFORMATION
OR,
The Progress thereof
IN
Some Foot-steps of it
IN
The Congregational way of CHURCHES
IN
ENGLAND,
From the Year of our Lord, 1640.

In three TREATISES,

Viz.
- The Apologetical Narration.
- The Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren.
- The Confession of Faith, By the Elders of the Churches at the *Savoy*.

And the Stone that Smote the Image became a great Mountain, and filled the whole Earth, Dan. 2. 34, 35.

LONDON,
Printed in the Year, 1629.

AN Apologeticall Narration,

HVMBLY SVBMITTED TO THE HONOURABLE HOUSES OF *PARLIAMENT.*

BY

Tho: Goodwin,
Philip Nye,
William Bridge,
Jer: Burroughes,
Sidrach Simpson.

LONDON,
Printed for ROBERT DAWLMAN.
M. DC. XLIII.

UNIV. EDINBURGEN

AN APOLOGETICALL NARRATION OF SOME MINISTERS, Formerly in Exile: NOW *Members of the* Assembly *of Divines.*

OUR eares have been of late so filled with a sudden and unexpected noyse of confused exclamations, (though not so expresly directed against us in particular, yet in the interpretation of the most, reflecting on us) that awakened thereby, we are enforced to anticipate a little that discovery of our selves which otherwise we resolved to have left to *Time* and *Experience* of our wayes and spirits, the truest Discoverers and surest Judges of all men and their actions.

And now we shall begin to make some appearance into publique light, unto whose view and judgements should we (that have hitherto laine under so dark a cloud of manifold mis apprehensions) at first present our selves, but the Supreame Judicatory of this Kingdome, which is and hath been in all times the most just and severe Tribunall

for guiltineſſe to appeare before, much more to dare to appeale unto; and yet withall the moſt ſacred refuge and *Aſylum* for miſtaken and miſ-judged innocence?

The moſt, if not all of us, had ten years ſince (ſome more, ſome leſſe) ſeverall ſetled Stations in the Miniſtery, in places of publique uſe in the Church, not unknown to many of your ſelves; but the ſinful evill of thoſe corruptions in the publique worſhip and government of this Church, which all doe now ſo generally acknowledge and decrie, took hold upon our conſciences long before ſome others of our brethren; And then how impoſſible it was to continue in thoſe times our ſervice and ſtandings, all mens apprehenſions will readily acquit us.

Neither at the firſt did we ſee or look further then the *dark part*, the evill of thoſe ſuperſtitions adjoyned to the worſhip of God, which have been the common ſtumbling block and offence of many thouſand tender conſciences, both in our own and our neighbour Churches, ever ſince the firſt Reformation of Religion: which yet was enough to deprive us of the publique exerciſe of our Miniſteries, and together therewith (as the watchfulneſſe of thoſe times grew) of our perſonall participation in ſome ordinances; and further expoſed us either to perſonall violence and perſecution, or an exile to avoid it: Which latter we did the rather chooſe, that ſo the uſe and exerciſe of our Miniſteries (for which we were borne and live) might not be wholly loſt, nor our ſelves remain de-

debarred from the enjoyment of the Ordinances of Christ, which we account our birth-right, and best portion in this life.

This being our condition, we were cast upon a farther necessity of enquiring into and viewing the *light part*, the positive part of *Church-worship* and Government; And to that end to search out what were the first Apostolique directions, pattern and examples of those Primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament, as that sacred pillar of fire to guide us. And in this enquirie, we lookt upon the word of Christ as impartially, and unprejudicedly, as men made of flesh and blood are like to doe in any juncture of time that may fall out; the places we went to, the condition we were in, the company we went forth with, affording no temptation to byas us any way, but leaving us as freely to be guided by that light and touch Gods Spirit should by the Word vouchsafe our consciences, as the Needle toucht with the Load-stone is in the Compasse: And we had (of all men) the greatest reason to be true to our own consciences in what we should embrace, seeing it was for our consciences that we were deprived at once of what ever was dear to us. We had no new Common-wealths to rear, to frame Church-government unto, whereof any one piece might stand in the others light, to cause the least variation by us from the Primitive pattern; We had no State-ends or Politicall interests to comply with; No Kingdoms in our eye to subdue unto our mould; (which yet will be coexistent with the peace of any form of Civil Govern-

ment on earth) No preferment or worldly reſpects to ſhape our opinions for: We had nothing elſe to doe but ſimply and ſingly to conſider how to worſhip God acceptably, and ſo moſt according to his word.

We were not engaged by Education or otherwiſe to any other of the Reformed Churches; And although we conſulted with reverence what they hold forth both in their writings and practice, yet we could not but ſuppoſe that they might not ſee into all things about worſhip and government, their intentions being moſt ſpent (as alſo of our firſt Reformers in *England*) upon the Reformation in Doctrine, in which they had a moſt happy hand: And we had with many others obſerved, that although the exerciſe of that Government had been accompanied with more peace, yet the Practicall part, *the power of godlineſſe* and the profeſſion thereof, with difference from carnall and formall Chriſtians, had not been advanced and held forth among them, as in this our owne Iſland, as themſelves have generally acknowledged. We had the advantage of all that light which the conflicts of our owne Divines (the good old Non-conformiſts) had ſtruck forth in their times; And the draughts of Diſcipline which they had drawn; which we found not in all things the very ſame with the practiſes of the Reformed Churches; And what they had written came much more commended to us, not onely becauſe they were our own, but becauſe ſealed with their manifold and bitter ſufferings. We had likewiſe the fatall miſcarriages and ſhipwracks

wracks of the *Separation* (whom ye call *Brownists*) as Land-marks to fore-warn us of thoſe rocks and ſhelves they ran upon; which alſo did put us upon an enquiry into the principles that might be the cauſes of their diviſions. Laſt of all, we had the recent and later example of the wayes and practices (and thoſe improved to a better Edition and greater refinement, by all the fore-mentioned helps) of thoſe multitudes of godly men of our own Nation, almoſt to the number of another Nation, and among them ſome as holy and judicious Divines as this Kingdome hath bred; whoſe ſincerity in their way hath been teſtified before all the world, and wil be unto all generations to come, by the greateſt undertaking (but that of our father *Abraham* out of his own countrey, and his ſeed after him) a tranſplanting themſelves many thouſand miles diſtance, and that by ſea, into a Wildernes, meerly to worſhip God more purely, whither to allure them there could be no other invitement. And yet we ſtill ſtood as unengaged ſpectators, free to examine and conſider what truth is to be found in and amongſt all theſe, (all which we look upon as Reformed Churches) and this nakedly according to the word; We reſolved not to take up our Religion by or from any partie, and yet to approve and hold faſt whatſoever is good in any, though never ſo much differing from us, yea oppoſite unto us.

And for our own congregations, we meane of *England* (in which thorough the grace of Chriſt we were converted, and exerciſed our Miniſteries

long, to the conversion of many others) We have this sincere profession to make before God and all the world, that all *that* conscience of the defilements we conceived to cleave to the true worship of God in them, or of the unwarranted power in Church Governours exercised therein, did never work in any of us any other thought, much lesse opinion, but that multitudes of the assemblies and parochiall congregations thereof, were *the true Churches and Body of Christ*, *and the Ministery thereof a true Ministery*: Much lesse did it ever enter into our hearts to judge them *Antichristian*; we saw and cannot but see that by the same reason the Churches abroad in *Scotland*, *Holland*, *&c.* (though more reformed) yet for their mixture must be in like manner judged no Churches also, which to imagine or conceive, is and hath ever been an horrour to our thoughts. Yea we alwayes have professed, & that in these times when the Churches of *England* were the most, either actually overspread with defilements, or in the greatest danger thereof, and when our selves had least, yea no hopes of ever so much as visiting our own land again in peace and safety to our persons; that we both did and would hold a *communion* with them as the Churches of Christ. And besides this profession, as a reall testimony thereof, some of us after we, actually, were in this way of communion, baptized our children in Parishionall congregations, and (as we had occasion) did offer to receive into the communion of the Lords Supper with us, some (whom we knew godly that come to visit us when we were

in

in our exile) upon that relation, fellowſhip, and commemberſhip they held in their pariſh Churches in *England*, they profeſſing themſelves to be members thereof, and belonging thereunto. What we have ſince our returne publiquely and avowedly made declaration of to this purpoſe, many hundreds can witneſſe, and ſome of our brethren in their printed bookes candidly do teſtify for us.

Mr. *Choynett.* Riſe & growth of Socinianiſme.

And as we alwayes held this reſpect unto our own Churches in this Kingdome, ſo we received and were entertained with the like from thoſe reformed Churches abroad, among whom we were caſt to live, we both mutually gave and received the right hand of fellowſhip, which they on their parts abundantly manifeſted by the very ſame characters and teſtimonies of difference which are proper to their own Orthodoxe Churches, and whereby they uſe to diſtinguiſh them from all thoſe ſects (which they tollerate, but not own) and all the aſſemblies of them (which yet now we are here ſome would needs ranke us with) granting to ſome of us their own Churches, or publique places for worſhip, to aſſemble in, where themſelves met for the worſhip of God at differing houres the ſame day: As likewiſe the priviledge of ringing a publique Bell to call unto our meetings: which we mention becauſe it is amongſt them made the great ſignall of difference between their own allowed Churches and all other aſſemblies, unto whom it is ſtrictly prohibited and forbidden, as *Guiciardine* hath long ſince obſerved: And others of us found ſuch acceptance with them, that in teſtimony thereof

of they allowed a full and liberall maintenance annually for our Miniſters, yea and conſtantly alſo Wine for our Communions. And then we again on our parts, not onely held all brotherly correſpondency with their Divines, but received alſo ſome of the members of their Churches (who deſired to communicate with us) unto communion in the Sacraments and other ordinances, by virtue of their relation of memberſhip retained in thoſe Churches.

Now for the way & practices of our Churches, we give this briefe and generall account. Our *publique worſhip* was made up of no other parts then the worſhip of all other reformed Churches doth conſiſt of. As, publique and ſolemne prayers *for Kings and all in authority, &c.* the reading the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; Expoſition of them as occaſion was; and conſtant preaching of the word; the adminiſtration of the two Sacraments, Baptiſme to infants, and the Lords Supper; ſinging of Pſalmes; collections for the poor, &c. every Lords day. For *Officers* and publique Rulers in the Church, we ſet up no other but the very ſame which the reformed Churches judge neceſſary and ſufficient, and as inſtituted by Chriſt and his Apoſtles for the perpetuall government of his Church, that is, *Paſtors, Teachers, Ruling Elders*, (with us not lay but Eccleſiaſtique perſons ſeparated to that ſervice) and *Deacons*. And for the matter *of governement and cenſures of the Church*, we had nor executed any other but what all acknow-

knowledge, namely, *Admonition*, and *Excommunication* upon obſtinacie and impenitencie, (which we bleſſe God we never exerciſed.) This latter we judged ſhould be put in execution, for no other kind of ſins then may evidently be preſumed to be perpetrated againſt the parties known light; as whether it be a ſin in manners and converſation, ſuch as is committed againſt the light of nature, or the common received practices of Chriſtianity, profeſſed in all the Churches of Chriſt; or it in opinions, then ſuch, as are likewiſe contrary to the received principles of Chriſtianity, and the power of godlineſſe, profeſſed by the party himſelfe, and univerſally acknowledged in all the reſt of the churches, and no other ſins to be the ſubject of that dreadful ſentence.

And for our directions in theſe or what ever elſe requiſite to the manage of them, we had theſe three Principles more eſpecially in our eye, to guide and ſteere our practice by.

Firſt, the ſupreame rule *without us*, was the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apoſtles. Our conſciences were poſſeſſed with that reverence and adoration of the fulneſſe of the Scriptures, that there is therein a compleat ſufficiencie, as to make the *man of God perfect*, ſo alſo to make the Churches of God perfect, (meere circumſtances we except, or what rules the law of nature doth in common dictate) if the directions and examples therein delivered were fully known and followed. And although we cannot profeſſe that ſufficiency of knowledge as to be

able to lay forth all thoſe rules therein which may meet with all caſes and emergencies that may or ſometimes did fal out amongſt us, or that may give ſatisfaction unto all Queres poſſible to be put unto us; yet we found principles enough, not onely *fundamentall* and eſſential to the being of a Church, but *ſuperſtructory* alſo for the wel-being of it, and thoſe to us cleare and certaine, and ſuch as might well ſerve to preſerve our Churches in peace and from offence, and would comfortably guide us to heaven in a ſafe way: And the obſervation of ſo many of thoſe particulars to be laid forth in the Word, became to us a more certaine evidence and cleare confirmation that there were the like rules and ruled caſes for all occaſions whatſoever, if we were able to diſcerne them. And for all ſuch caſes wherein we ſaw not a cleare reſolution from Scripture, example, or direction, wee ſtil profeſſedly ſuſpended, untill God ſhould give us further light, not daring to eeke out what was defective in our light in matters Divine with humane prudence, (the fatall errour to Reformation) leſt by *ſowing* any *piece of the old garment* unto *the new*, we ſhould make the *rent worſe*; we having this promiſe of grace for our encouragement in this, which in our publique Aſſemblies was often for our comfort mentioned, that *in thus doing the will of God we ſhould know more.*

A ſecond Principle we carryed along with us in all our reſolutions, was, Not to make our preſent judgement and practice a binding law unto our ſelves for the future, which we in like manner made con-

continuall profeſſion of upon all occaſions. We had too great an inſtance of our own frailty in the former way of our conformity; and therefore in a jealouſie of our ſelves, we kept this reſerve, (which we made open and conſtant profeſſions of) to alter and retract (though not lightly) what ever ſhould be diſcovered to be taken up out of a miſ-underſtanding of the rule: Which Principle wee wiſh were (next to that moſt ſupreame, namely, to be in all things guided by the perfect wil of God) enacted as the moſt *ſacred law* of all other, in the midſt of all other Laws and Canons Eccleſiaſtical in Chriſtian States and Churches throughout the world.

Thirdly, we are able to hold forth this true and juſt Apologie unto the world, That in the matters of greateſt moment and controverſie, we ſtil choſe to practice ſafely, and ſo, as we had reaſon to judge that all ſorts, or the moſt of all the Churches did acknowledge warrantable, although they make *additaments* thereunto.

For inſtance: Whereas one great controverſie of theſe times is about the *qualification of the Members* of Churches, and the promiſcuous receiving and mixture of good and bad; Therein we choſe the better part, and to be ſure, received in none but ſuch as all the Churches in the world would by the balance of the Sanctuary acknowledge faithful. And yet in this we are able to make this true and juſt profeſſion alſo, That the Rules which we gave up our judgements unto, to judge thoſe vve received in amongſt us by, vvere of that latitude

titude as would take in any member of Christ, the meaneſt, in whom there may be ſuppoſed to be the *leaſt of Chriſt*, and indeed ſuch and no other as all the godly in this Kingdome carry in their boſomes to judge others by. We took meaſure of no mans holineſſe by his opinion, whether concurring with us, or adverſe unto us; And Churches made up of ſuch, we were ſure no Proteſtant could but approve of, (as touching the members of it) to be a true Church, with which communion might be held. Againe, concerning the great ordinance of *Publique Prayer* and the *Lyturgie* of the Church, whereas there is this great controverſie upon it about the lawfulneſſe of ſet formes preſcribed; we practiced (without condemning others) what all ſides doe allow, and themſelves doe practice alſo, that the publique Prayers in our Aſſemblies ſhould be framed by the meditations and ſtudy of our own Miniſters, out of their own gifts, (the fruits of Chriſts Aſcenſion) as well as their Sermons uſe to be. This vve vvere ſure all allowed of, though they ſuperadded the other. So likewiſe for the government and diſcipline in the Churches, however the practice of the Reformed Churches is in greater matters to govern each particular congregation by a combined *Presbyterie* of the *Elders* of ſeveral congregations united in one for government; yet ſo, as in their judgements they allow, eſpecially in ſome caſes, a particular congregation, an entire and compleat power of juriſdiction to be exerciſed by the Elders thereof within it ſelfe; Yea and our own Maſter *Cartwright*, holy *Baynes*, and other old

Non-

Non-conformiſts, place the power of Excommunication in the Elderſhip of each particular Church with the conſent of the Church, untill they do miſcarry, and then indeed they ſubject them to ſuch Presbyterial and Provincial Aſſemblies as the proper refuge for appeales and for compounding of differences amongſt Churches; which combination of Churches others of them therefore call *Eccleſiæ ortæ*, but particular congregations *Eccleſiæ primæ*, as wherein *firſtly* the power and priviledg of a Church is to be exerciſed. And vvithall vve could not but imagine, that the firſt Churches planted by the Apoſtles, were ordinarily of no more in one city at firſt then might make up one entire congregation, ruled by their own Elders, that alſo preached to them; for that in every city where they came, the number of converts did or ſhould ariſe to ſuch a multitude as to make ſeveral and ſundry congregations, or that the Apoſtles ſhould ſtay the ſetting up of any Churches at all, until they roſe to ſuch a numerous multiplication as might make ſuch a Presbyterial combination, we did not imagine. We found alſo thoſe *Non conformiſts* (that wrote againſt the Epiſcopal Government) in their Anſwer to the Arguments uſed for Epiſcopal Government over many Churches, brought from the inſtances of the multitude of Beleevers at *Jeruſalem*, and other places and cities, mentioned in the New Teſtament, to aſſert that it could not be infallibly proved that any of thoſe vve reade of in the *Acts* and elſewhere; vvere yet ſo numerous, as neceſſarily to exceed the limits of one particular congre-

gation in thoſe firſt times. We found it alſo granted by them all, that there ſhould be ſeveral Elders in every congregation, who had power over them in the Lord; and we judged that all thoſe precepts, *obey your Elders*, and *them that are over you*, were (to be ſure, and all grant it) meant of the Paſtours and Teachers, and other Elders that were ſet over them in each particular congregation reſpectively, and to be as certainly the intendment of the holy Ghoſt, as in thoſe like commands, *Wives obey your owne husbands*, *Servants your own governours*, to be meant of their ſeveral Families reſpectively.

We could not therefore but judge it a ſafe and an allowed way to retaine the government of our ſeverall congregations for matter of diſcipline within themſelves, to be exerciſed by their own Elders, whereof we had (for the moſt part of the time we were abroad) three at leaſt in each congregation, whom we were ſubject to: yet not clayming to our ſelves an *independent power* in every congregation, to give account or be ſubject to none others, but onely a ful and entire power compleat within our ſelves, until we ſhould be challenged to erre groſly; ſuch as *Corporations* enjoy, who have the power and priviledge to paſſe ſentence for life & death within themſelves, and yet are accountable to the State they live in. But that it ſhould be the inſtitution of Chriſt or his Apoſtles, that the combination of the Elders of many Churches ſhould be the firſt compleat and entire ſeat of Church power over each congregation ſo combined; or that they could challenge and aſſume that

that authority over thoſe Churches they feed and teach not ordinarily by virtue of thoſe fore-mentioned Apoſtolicall precepts, was to us a queſtion, and judged to be an *additament* unto the other, which therefore reſted on thoſe that allowed us what we practiſed, over and above, to make evident and demonſtrate (and certainly of all other the challenge of all ſpiritual power from Chriſt had need have a cleare pattent to ſhew for it) Yea wee appeale further unto them that have read bookes, whether untill thoſe latter wrytings of the two reverend and learned *Divines of Scotland* ſet forth after our return, nor much more then two yeeres ſince, and others of no elder date from *Holland*, and one of our *own* Divines more lately written with much learning and ingenuity; there hath been much ſettly and directly or with ſtrength inſiſted on to prove that governement, and although aſſert and inculcate it they do as their opinions, yet the full ſtrength and ſtreame of our Non-conformiſts wrytings and others are ſpent rather in arguments againſt, & for the overthrowing the Epiſcopall government, and the corruptions that cleave to our worſhip, and in maintayning thoſe ſeverall Officers in Churches which Chriſt hath inſtituted in ſtead thereof (in which we fully agree with them) then in the proofe of a combined claſſicall Presbyteriall government as it is *authoritatively* practiſed in the moſt reformed Churches.

And whereas the common prejudice and exception laid into all mens thoughts againſt us and our opinions is, that in ſuch a congregationall governement

ment thus entire within it ſelf, there is no allowed ſufficient remedy for miſcarriages, though never ſo groſſe; no relieſe for wrongful ſentences or perſons injured thereby; no roome for complaints: no powerful or effectual means to reduce a Church or Churches that fal into hereſie, ſchiſme, &c. but every one is left and may take liberty without controule to do what is good in their own eyes; we have (through the good providence of God upon us) from the avowed declarations of our *judgements* among our Churches mutually during our exile, and that alſo confirmed by the moſt ſolemne inſtance of our *practice*, wherewith to vindicate our ſelves and way in this particular; which upon no other occaſion we ſhould ever have made thus publique.

God ſo ordered it that a ſcandall and offence fell out between thoſe very Churches whilſt living in this baniſhment (whereof we our ſelves, that write theſe things, were then the Miniſters) one of our Churches having unhappily depoſed one of their Miniſters, the other judged it not onely as too ſuddaine an act (having proceeded in a matter of ſo great moment without conſulting their ſiſter Churches, as was publiquely profeſſed we ſhould have done in ſuch caſes of concernement) but alſo in the proceedings thereof as too ſevere, and not managed according to the rules laid down in the word. In this caſe our Churches did mutually and univerſally acknowledge and ſubmit to this as a ſacred and undoubted principle and ſupreame law to be obſerved among all Churches, that as by virtue

virtue of that Apoſtolical command, Churches as wel as particular men *are bound to give no offence neither to Iew nor Gentile, nor the Churches of God* they live amongſt. So that in all caſes of ſuch offence or difference, by the obligation of the cõmon law of *cõmunion of Churches*, & for the *vindication of the glory of Chriſt*, which in cõmon they hold forth, the church or churches chalenged to *offend* or *differ*, are to ſubmit themſelves (upon the challenge of the offence or complaint of the perſon wronged) to the moſt full & open tryall & examination by other neighbour Churches offended thereat, of what ever hath given the offence: And further, that by the virtue of the ſame and like law of *not partaking in other mens ſins*, the Churches offended may & ought upon the impenitency of thoſe Churches, perſiſting in their errour and miſcarriage to pronounce that heavy ſentence, againſt them, of with-drawing and renouncing all Chriſtian communion with them until they do repent; And further to declare and proteſt this, with the cauſes thereof, to all other Churches of Chriſt, that they may do the like.

And what further *authority*, or proceedings purely *Eccleſiaſticall*, of one, or many ſiſter Churches towards another whole Church, or Churches offending, either the Scriptures doe hold forth, or can rationally be put in execution (without the Magiſtrates interpoſing a power of another nature, unto which we upon his particular cogniſance, and examination of ſuch cauſes, profeſſe ever to ſubmit, and alſo to be moſt vvilling to have recourſe unto) for our parts vve ſavv not then, nor do yet ſee. And

likewiſe we did then ſuppoſe, and doe yet, that this principle of ſubmiſſion of Churches that miſcarry unto other Churches offended, together with this other, that it is a command from Chriſt enjoyned to Churches that are finally offended to denounce ſuch a ſentence of *Non-communion* and *withdrawing* from them whilſt impenitent, as unworthy to hold forth the name of Chriſt, (*theſe* principles being received and generally acknowledged by the Churches of Chriſt to be a mutuall duty, as ſtrictly enjoyned them by Chriſt as any other) that theſe would be as effectuall means (through the bleſſing of Chriſt) to awe and preſerve Churches and their Elders in their duties, as that other of claime to an authoritative power Eccleſiaſtical to *Excommunicate* other Churches or their Elders offending; For if the one be compared with the other, in a meere Eccleſiaſtial notion, *That* of Excommunication pretended hath but this more in it, That it is a *delivering* of whole Churches and their Elders offending *unto Satan*, (for which we know no warrant in the Scriptures, that Churches ſhould have ſuch a power over other Churches) And then as for the binding obligation both of the one way & the other, it can be ſuppoſed to lye but in theſe 2. things; Firſt, in a warrant and injunction given by Chriſt to his Churches, to put either the one or the other into execution; and 2. that mens conſciences be accordingly taken therewith, ſo as to ſubject themſelves whether unto the one way or the other: For ſuppoſe that other principle of an *authoritative* power in the greater part of Churches com-

combined to excommunicate other Churches,&c. to be the ordinance of God, yet unleſſe it doe take hold of mens conſciences, and be received amongſt all Churches, the offending Churches will ſleight all ſuch *Excommunications* as much, as they may be ſuppoſed to doe our way of proteſtation and ſentence of *Non-communion*. On the other ſide, let this way of ours be but as ſtrongly entertained, as that which is the way and command of Chriſt, and upon all occaſions be heedfully put in execution, it will awe mens conſciences as much, and produce the ſame effects. And if the Magiſtrates power (to which we give as much, and (as we think) more, then the principles of the Presbiteriall government will ſuffer them to yeeld) doe but aſſiſt and back the ſentence of other Churches denouncing this *Non-communion* againſt Churches miſcarrying, according to the nature of the crime, as they judge meet, and as they would the ſentence of Churches excommunicating other Churches in ſuch caſes, upon their own particular judgement of the cauſe; then, without all controverſie this our way of Church proceeding wil be every way as effectuall as their other can be ſuppoſed to be; and we are ſure, more brotherly and more ſuited to that liberty and equality Chriſt hath endowed his Churches with. But without the Magiſtrates interpoſing their authority, their way of proceeding will be as ineffectuall as ours; and more lyable to contempt, by how much it is pretended to be more authoritative; and to inflict a more dreadful puniſhment, which carnall ſpirits are ſeldome ſenſible of. This for our judgements.

And for a *reall evidence* and *demonſtration* both that this was then, our judgements, as likewiſe for an inſtance of the effectuall ſucceſſe of ſuch a courſe held by Churches in ſuch caſes, our own practice, and the bleſſing of God thereon, may plead and teſtifie for us to all the world. The manage of this tranſaction in briefe was this.

That Church which (with others) was moſt ſcandalized, did by letters declare their offence, requiring of the Church (ſuppoſed to be) offending, *in the name* and for the vindication of the honour of Chriſt, and the releeving the party wronged, to yeeld a full and publique hearing before all the Churches of our Nation, or any other whomſoever, offended, of what they could give in charge againſt their proceedings in that depoſition of their Miniſter, and to ſubject themſelves to an open try-all and review of all thoſe forepaſſed carriages that concerned that particular; which they moſt cheerfully and readily (according to the fore-mentioned principles) ſubmitted unto, in *a place*, and *ſtate* where no outward violence or any other externall authority either civil or eccleſiaſticall would have enforced them thereunto: And accordingly the Miniſters of the Church offended with other two Gentlemen, of much worth, wiſdom and piety, members thereof, were ſent as *Meſſengers* from that Church; and at the introduction and entrance into that ſolemne aſſembly (the ſolemnity of which hath left as deep an impreſſion upon our hearts of Chriſts dreadfull preſence as ever any we have been preſent at,) it was openly and publiquely profeſſed

teſſed in a ſpeech that was the preface to that diſcuſſion, to this effect, " That it was the moſt to be " abhorred maxime that any Religion hath ever " made profeſſion of, and therefore of all other the " moſt contradictory and diſhonourable unto that " of Chriſtianity, that a ſingle and particular ſoci- " ety of men profeſſing the name of Chriſt, and " pretending to be endowed with a power from " Chriſt to judge them that are of the ſame body " and ſociety within themſelves, ſhould further ar- " rogate unto themſelves an exemption from " giving account or being cenſurable by any other, " either Chriſtian Magiſtrate above them, or neigh- " bour Churches about them. So far were our judgements from that *independent* liberty that is imputed to us, then, when we had leaſt dependency on this kingdom, or ſo much as hopes ever to abide therein in peace. And for the iſſue and ſucceſſe of this *agitation*, after there had been for many dayes as judiciary and full a charge, tryall, and depoſition of witneſſes openly afore all commers of all ſorts, as can be expected in any Court where Authority enjoyns it, that Church, which had offended, did as publiquely acknowledge their ſinfull aberration in it, reſtored their *Miniſter* to his place again, and ordered a ſolemn day of faſting to humble themſelves afore God and men, for their ſinfull carriage in it; and the party alſo which had been depoſed did acknowledge to that Church wherein he had likewiſe ſinned.

Thus we have rendred ſome ſmal account of thoſe, the ſaddeſt days of our pilgrimage on earth, wherein

although we enjoyed God, yet beſides many other miſeries (the companions of baniſhment) we loſt ſome friends and companions, our fellow labourers in the Goſpel, as precious men as this earth beares any, through the diſtemper of the place, and our ſelves came hardly off that ſervice with our healths, yea lives.

When it pleaſed God to bring us his poor *Exiles* back again in theſe revolutions of the times, as alſo of the condition of this kingdom, into our own land, (the pouring forth of manifold prayers and teares for the proſperity whereof, had been no ſmall part of that publique worſhip we offered up to God in a ſtrange land;) we found the judgement of many of our godly learned brethren in the Miniſtery (that deſired a general reformation) to differ from ours in ſome things, wherein we do profeſſedly judge the *Calvinian* Reformed Churches of the firſt reformation from out of Popery, to ſtand in need of a further reformation themſelves; And it may without prejudice to them, or the imputation of Schiſme in us from them, be thought, that they comming new out of Popery (as well as *England*) and the founders of that reformation not having *Apoſtolique infallibility*, might not be fully perfect the firſt day. Yea and it may hopefully be conceived, that *God* in his ſecret, yet wiſe and gratious diſpenſation, had left *England* more unreformed as touching the outward form, both of worſhip & Church government, then the neighbour Churches were, having yet powerfully continued a conſtant conflict and contention

tention for a further Reformation for theſe foure-ſcore yeers; during which time he had likewiſe in ſtead thereof bleſſed them with the ſpiritual light (and that encreaſing) of the power of Religion in the Practique part of it, ſhining brighter and clearer then in the neighbour Churches, as having in his infinite mercy on purpoſe reſerved and *provided ſome better thing* for this Nation when it ſhould come to be reformed, that the other Churches might not be made *perfect without it*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks.

We found alſo (which was as great an affliction to us as our former troubles and baniſhment) our opinions and wayes (wherein we might ſeem to differ) environed about with a cloud of miſtakes and miſapprehenſions, and our perſons with reproaches, Beſides other calumnies, as of *ſchiſme*, &c. (which yet muſt either relate to a differing from the former Eccleſiaſtical Government of this Church eſtabliſhed, and then who is not involved in it as well as we? or to that conſtitution and government that is yet to come; and untill that be agreed on, eſtabliſhed and declared, and actually exiſt, there can be no guilt or imputation of Schime from it) *That* proud and inſolent title of *Independencie* was affixed unto us, as our claime; the very ſound of which conveys to all mens apprehenſions the challenge of an exemption of all Churches from all ſubjection and dependance, or rather a trumpet of defiance againſt what ever *Power*, *Spirituall* or *Civill*, which we doe abhor and deteſt: Or elſe the odious name of *Browniſme*, together with all their opinions as they have ſtated and maintained

ned them, muſt needs be owned by us: Although upon the very firſt declaring our judgements in the chief and fundamental point of all *Church diſcipline*, and likewiſe ſince, it hath been acknowledged that we differ much from them. And wee did then, and doe here publiquely profeſſe, we beleeve the truth to lye and conſiſt in a *middle way* betwixt that which is falſly charged on us, *Browniſme*; and that which is the contention of theſe times, the *authoritative Presbyteriall Government* in all the ſubordinations and proceedings of it.

And had we been led in our former wayes, and our removall out of this Kingdome by any ſuch *ſpirit* of *faction* and diviſion, or of *pride* and *ſingularity*, (which are the uſual grounds of all Schiſme) we had ſince our returns again during this intermiſticall ſeaſon, tentations, yea provocations enough to have drawn forth ſuch a ſpirit; having manifold advantages to make and encreaſe a partie, which we have not in the leaſt attempted. We found the ſpirits of the people of this Kingdome that profeſſe or pretend to the power of godlineſſe (they finding themſelves to be ſo much at liberty, and new come out of bondage) ready to take any impreſſions, and to be caſt into any mould that hath but the appearance of a ſtricter way. And we found that many of thoſe miſts that had gathered about us, or were rather caſt upon our perſons in our abſence, began by our preſence againe, and the bleſſing of God upon us, in a great meaſure to ſcatter and vaniſh, without ſpeaking a word for our ſelves or Cauſe.

But

But through the grace of Chriſt, our ſpirits are and have been ſo remote from ſuch diſpoſitions & aymes, that on the contrary we call God and men towitnes our conſtant forbearance, either to publiſh our opinions by preaching (although we had the Pulpits free) or to print any thing of our owne or others for the vindication of our ſelves (although the Preſſes were more free then the Pulpits) or to act for our ſelves or way; although we have been from the firſt provoked unto all theſe all ſorts of wayes, both by the common miſ-underſtandings and miſ-repreſentations of our opinions and practiſes, together with incitements to this State not to allow us the peaceable practiſes of our *Conſciences*, which the Reformed Churches abroad allowed us, and theſe edged with calumnies and reproaches caſt upon our perſons in print; and all theſe heightned with this further prejudice and provocation, that this our ſilence was interpreted, that we were either aſhamed of our opinions, or able to ſay little for them; when as on the other ſide (beſides all other advantages) Books have been written by men of much worth, learning, and authority, with moderation and ſtrength, to prepoſſeſſe the peoples minds againſt what are ſuppoſed our Tenets. But we knew and conſidered that it was the *ſecond blow that makes the quarrell*, and that the *beginning of ſtrife* would have been as the *breaking in of waters*; and the ſad and conſcientious apprehenſion of the danger of rending and dividing the godly Proteſtant party in this Kingdome that were deſirous of Reformation, and of making ſe-

verall intereſts among them in a time when there was an abſolute neceſſity of their neereſt union and conjunction, and all little enough to effect that Reformation intended, and ſo long contended for, againſt a common adverſary that had both preſent poſſeſſion to plead for it ſelfe, power to ſupport it, and had enjoyed a long continued ſettlement which had rooted it in the hearts of men; And this ſeconded by the inſtant and continuall advices and conjurements of many *Honourable*, wiſe, and godly *Perſonages* of both *Houſes* of *Parliament*, to forbeare what might any way be like to occaſion or augment this unhappy difference; They having alſo by their Declarations to His Majeſty profeſſed their endeavour and deſire to unite the Proteſtant partie in this Kingdome, that agree in Fundamentall Truths againſt Popery and other Hereſies, and to have that reſpect to tender conſciences as might prevent oppreſſions and inconveniences which had formerly been; Together with that ſtrict engagement willingly entred into by us for theſe common ends, with the reſt of our brethren of the Miniſtery, (which though made to continue but *ad placitum*, yet hath been ſacred to us.) And above all, the due reſpect we have had to the peaceable and orderly Reformation of this Church and State; the hopefull expectation we have been entertained with of an happy *latitude* and agreement by means of this *Aſſembly*, and the wiſdome of this *Parliament*: The conſcience and conſideration of all theſe, and the weight of each, have hitherto had more power with us to this deepe ſilence and forbearance, then all

all our own intereſts have any way prevailed with us to occaſion the leaſt diſturbance amongſt the people. We have and are yet reſolved to beare all this with a quiet and a ſtrong patience, (in the ſtrength of which we now ſpeak, or rather ſigh forth this little) referring the vindication of our perſons to God, and a further experience of us by men; and the declaration of our judgements, and what we conceive to be his truth therein, to the due and orderly agitation of this *Aſſembly* whereof *both Houſes* were pleaſed to make us *Members*.

And whereas our ſilence upon all the forementioned grounds (for which we know we can never loſe eſteeme with good and wiſe men) hath been by the ill interpretation of ſome, imputed either to our conſciouſneſſe of the badneſſe and weakneſſe of our Cauſe, or to our unability to maintain what we aſſert in difference from others, or anſwer what hath been written by others, wee ſhall (with all modeſty) onely preſent this to all mens apprehenſions in confutation of it. That what ever the truth and juſtneſſe of our Cauſe may prove to be, or how ſlender our abilities to defend it, yet wee pretend at leaſt to ſo much wiſdome, that wee would never have reſerved our ſelves for, but rather by all wayes have declined *this Theatre*, of all other, the moſt judicious and ſevere, an *Aſſembly* of ſo many able, learned, and grave *Divines*, where much of the piety, wiſdome, and learning of two Kingdomes are met in one, honoured and aſſiſted with the preſence of the *Worthies* of both *Houſes* at all debates (as often as they pleaſe to vouchſafe

their preſence) as the Stage whereon firſt wee would bring forth into publique view our Tenets (if falſe and counterfet) together with our own folly and weakneſſe: We would much rather have choſen to have been venting them to the multitude, apt to be ſeduced, (which we have had theſe three yeers opportunity to have done.) But in a conſcientious regard had to the orderly and peaceable way of ſearching out truths, and reforming the Churches of Chriſt, we have adventured our ſelves upon this way of God, wiſely aſſumed by the prudence of the State; And therein alſo upon all ſorts of diſadvantages (which we could not but foreſee) both of *number*, *abilities* of learning, *Authority*, the ſtreame of *publique intereſt*; Truſting God both with our ſelves and his own truth, as he ſhall be pleaſed to manage it by us.

Moreover, if in all matters of *Doctrine*, we were not as *Orthodoxe* in our judgements as our brethren themſelves, we would never have expoſed our ſelves to this tryall and hazard of diſcovery in this Aſſembly, the mixture of whoſe ſpirits, the quick-ſightednes of whoſe judgements (intent enough upon us) and variety of debates about all ſorts of controverſies afoot in theſe times of contradiction, are ſuch, as would be ſure ſoon to find us out if we nouriſhed any monſters or Serpents of opinions lurking in our boſomes. And if we had carryed it ſo, as that hitherto ſuch errours were not *aforehand open* to the view and *judgement* of all, yet fitting

ſitting here (unleſſe we would be ſilent, which we have not been) *we could not long be hid.* But it is ſufficiently known that in all *points of doctrine* (which hitherto in the review and examination of the *Articles* of our Church, or upon other occaſions have been gone thorough) our judgements have ſtill concurred with the greateſt part of our brethren, neither do we know wherein we have diſſented. And in matters of *Diſcipline* we are ſo farre from holding up the differences that occur, or making the breaches greater or wider, that we endeavour upon all ſuch occaſions to grant and yeeld (as all may ſee and cannot but teſtifie for us) to the utmoſt latitude of our light and conſciences; profeſſing it to be as high a point of Religion and conſcience readily to own, yea fall down before whatſoever is *truth* in the hands of thoſe that differ, yea though they ſhould be enemies unto us, as much as earneſtly to contend for & hold faſt thoſe truths wherein we ſhould be found diſſenting from them; and this as in relation to peace, ſo alſo as a juſt due to truth and goodnes, even to approve it & acknowledge it to the utmoſt graine of it, though mingled with what is oppoſite unto us. And further when matters by diſcuſſion are brought to the ſmalleſt diſſent that may be, we have hitherto been found to be no *backward* urgers unto a temper (not onely in things that have concerned our own conſciences, but when of others alſo) ſuch as may ſuit and tend to union as well as ſearching out of truth; judging this to be as great and uſefull an end of *Synods*

and *Aſſemblies*, as a curious and exact diſcuſſion of all ſorts of leſſer differences with binding *Determinations* of truth one way.

And thus we have nakedly and with all ſimplicity rendred a cleare and true account of our wayes and ſpirits hitherto; Which we made choice of now at firſt to make our ſelves known by, rather then by a more exact and *Scholaſtique* relation of our judgements in the points of difference about *Church government*; reſerving that unto the more proper ſeaſon and opportunity of this *Aſſembly*, and that liberty given by both Honourable Houſes in matters of diſſent; or as neceſſity ſhall after require, to a more publique way of ſtating and aſſerting of them. In the meane time from this briefe hiſtoricall relation of our practices, there may a true eſtimate be taken of our opinions in difference, which being inſtanced in, and ſet out by practices, is the moſt reall and leaſt colluſive way, and carries its own evidence with it. All which we have taken the boldnes together with our ſelves humbly to lay at the feet of *your wiſdom and piety*; Beſeeching you to look upon us under no other Notion, or character, then as thoſe, who if we cannot aſſume to have been no way furtherers of that reformation you intend, yet who have been no way hinderers thereof, or diſturbers of the publique peace; and who in our judgements about the preſent work of this age, the reformation of worſhip and diſcipline, do differ as little from the Reformed Churches, and our Brethren, yea far leſſe, then they do from what themſelves were three yeers paſt, or then the gene-

generallity of this kingdom from it ſelf of late. And withall to conſider us as thoſe, who in theſe former times, for many yeers ſuffered even to exile, for what the kingdom it ſelf now ſuffers in the endeavour to caſt out; and who in theſe preſent times, and ſince the change of them, have endured (that which to our ſpirits is no leſſe grievous) the oppoſition and reproach of good men, even to the threatning of another baniſhment, and have been through the grace of God upon us, the ſame men in both, in the midſt of theſe varieties; And finally, as thoſe that do purſue no other intereſt or deſigne but a ſubſiſtance (be it the pooreſt and meaneſt) in our own land (where we have and may do further ſervice, & which is our birth-right as we are men) with the enjoyment of the ordinances of Chriſt (which are our portion as we are Chriſtians) with the allowance of a latitude to ſome leſſer differences with peaceableneſſe, as not knowing where elſe with ſafety, health, and livelyhood, to ſet our feet on earth.

Tho: Goodwin, *Philip Nye,* *William Bridge,* } *Jer: Burroughes,* *Sidrach Simpſon.*

FINIS.